

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. In a system management controller included in a computer system, a method
2 of accessing event data describing a failure, the method comprising:
3 configuring the system management controller to monitor a task of writing data to an
4 event log, the task being executed by a Basic Input Output System (BIOS)
5 program in response to the failure;
6 monitoring the task for completion;
7 accessing the event data if the task fails to complete.

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the failure generates a system management
2 interrupt and the BIOS program is triggered in response to the system management interrupt.

1 3. The method of claim 1, wherein monitoring the task comprises:
2 setting a configurable time of a watchdog timer, the task being configured to access
3 the event data, and write the data to the event log in response to the event data,
4 the task being completed within the configurable time set in the watchdog
5 timer;
6 receiving an indication from the BIOS program on completion of the task.

1 4. The method of claim 3, wherein the task fails to complete when the task fails
2 to receive the indication from the BIOS program.

1 5. The method of claim 3, wherein receiving the indication from the BIOS
2 program comprises resetting the configurable time in the watchdog timer.

1 6. The method of claim 1, wherein the event data is stored in a memory of the
2 computer system by a controller device included in the computer system.

1 7. The method of claim 6, wherein the controller device is a memory controller.

1 8. The method of claim 6, wherein the controller device is an I/O controller.

1 9. The method of claim 1, wherein the system management controller accesses
2 the event data over a system bus of the computer system.

1 10. The method of claim 9, wherein the system bus is a SMBus.

1 11. The method of claim 1 further comprising, the system management controller
2 writing the event log in response to accessing the event data.

1 12. The method of claim 11, wherein writing the event log occurs over a system
2 bus of the computer system.

1 13. The method of claim 12, wherein the system bus is a SMBus.

1 14. A method of accessing event data on a failure of a computer system, the
2 method comprising:
3 executing a BIOS program to access the event data in response to a first failure of the
4 computer system;
5 triggering a watchdog timer in a system management controller of the computer
6 system, the watchdog timer being triggered substantially concurrent to the first
7 failure;
8 configuring the watchdog timer to allow the BIOS program to complete in absence of
9 a second failure;
10 determining whether the execution of the BIOS program caused the second failure,
11 the second failure forcing the watchdog timer to expire; and
12 the system management controller accessing the event data when the watchdog timer
13 expires.

10027618-102201

1 15. The method of claim 14, wherein the second failure is substantially similar to
2 the first failure.

1 16. The method of claim 14, wherein the second failure occurs while a processor
2 included in the computer system operates in a SMM mode.

1 17. A computer system comprising:
2 a processor;
3 a memory coupled to the processor;
4 a BIOS program stored in the memory, the BIOS program being operable to write
5 data to an event log in response to a critical event;
6 a system controller coupled to the memory and the processor, the system controller
7 operable to:
8 receive an indication of the critical event;
9 upon receipt of the indication, initiate operation of a timer; and
10 determine whether the BIOS program has written the data to the event
11 log within a configurable period of time defined by the timer.

1 18. In a computer system having a processor and a system controller, a method of
2 responding to an event, the method comprising:
3 issuing an interrupt to the processor in response to the event;
4 detecting the interrupt at the system controller coupled to the processor;
5 initiating a timer in the system controller upon detection of the interrupt;
6 attempting to write data to an event log by executing a BIOS program;
7 the system controller determining whether the execution of the BIOS program
8 resulted in writing data to the event log.

1 19. The method of claim 18 further comprising:
2 if execution of the BIOS does not result in the writing of the data to the event log
3 before expiration of a time period established by the timer, causing the system
4 controller to respond to the event.